The Bloomsbury Companion to Dance Studies

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Dance to learn from others

Imagine a dance education setting: teacher, learners, location and the like. The instructor understands her first task is to make a decision about what content to begin with. She decides to begin with the action concept 'to rotate': a physical revolution (from the Latin *revolutio*, 'a turn around') that is a turn of the body-as-a-whole or of parts of the body. Does she consider the difference between a rotation that is just 'done' in a purely functional sense and a rotation 'performed'? The difference lies in the manner of repetition, of observation, of learning. The distinction reveals the constraints on human cognition, values of specific cultures and technologies of instruction. Another immediate choice is how to begin: do-as-I-do or do-as-I-say? This pivot goes right on the left leg. A rolling point of contact evokes a historical frame of reference. The twist of a wrist reveals an open palm, suggesting an indigenous kind. Should one reflect on the aesthetics of torsion in a pirouette, watch a documentary on contact improvisation or appreciate the cultural motif? Or perhaps one should pull out an anatomical model, noting that the wrist joint itself does not twist or allow for any such rotary movement?

Dance educators face a myriad of questions about what and how, why and who, where and when to teach dance, all of which underscore the socially constructed nature of instruction itself. The unique human capacity to learn from others is what enables complex cultural knowledge to be faithfully learned and transmitted from generation to generation. The idea that socially learned information (culture) is central to human adaptations is not new, but the increasingly accepted argument that peoples and communities have been shaping their own evolution for the past 20,000 years or so is a current trend with new evidence from biology and genomics (Richerson, Boyd and Henrich 2010). For educators, the possibility that gene-culture coevolution could be the dominant

mode of human evolution brings to the fore questions of learning and teaching like never before. If evolutionary fitness is related to the capacity to survive, defining a measure of the contribution of an organism to the next generation, then one might reasonably ask what is the educational fitness of a discipline to instruct, enabling their young to develop and thrive?

For many, the discipline of dance is the quintessential example of social learning in human society. To learn dance is to experience a wide range of social formations and cultural activities. From a baby bouncing rhythmically in celebration to watching a pair of professional dancers in competition, humans experience dancing across the lifespan. To teach dance, on the other hand, is to enculturate the dancer into a world of meanings and movements. While biologists have tended to focus on the adaptive value of social learning, dance educators tend to be concerned with how we learn from one another. Current ideas about learning and human development mirror the shift in evolutionary biology. Our bodies and minds are dynamically changing throughout our lives, and experiences (not just genes) alter brain structure, chemistry, gene expression and, ultimately, personal and cultural development (Pastena, D'anna and Paloma 2013). Activities shape individuals. Individuals shape activities. This is the circular logic implicit in teaching and learning.

What sometimes gets lost in the discussion of education in general, and dance education in particular, is that pedagogy is itself a discipline that concerns the study of how *best* to teach. Pedagogical practice may be shaped by administrative policy, assessment practices, classroom management strategies, curricular specialists and the like, but it focuses first and foremost on the art and science of instruction. The theory and practice of education writ large informs teaching practices (pedagogy) that also must grapple with the specific cognitions, cultures, histories and technologies of the domain under study (contents). In 1986, the influential educational theorist Lee Shulman introduced the concept 'pedagogical content knowledge' to describe the interplay between pedagogy and content. It is still valued today as an epistemological concept that usefully blends together the traditionally separated knowledge bases of content and pedagogy. In Shulman's words, the intersection contains within it 'the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations – in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others' (Shulman 1986: 9).

As Shulman suggests, to become a successful dance teacher, one has to confront both issues of content and pedagogy simultaneously. How? The object of dance

may be to devise situations where one enjoys making meaning, and in some sense apprehends meaning, immediately embodied in a culturally specific expressive activity, but it is the transformation of dance experience for instruction that occurs only when the teacher critically reflects on and interprets the dancing subject. To do so, dance educators must combine (at least) physical and conceptual, rhythmic and relational, emotional and experiential, historical and cultural facets. Dancing is a creative medium, method and process by which individuals and communities actively pursue knowledge in, through and about their lives. It usually involves a sense of self and connection to others, to environments, to societies and beyond. It is the potential to advance such embodied understandings, creative expressions and cultural competencies for learner and teacher alike that motivates the field of dance education (Stinson 2016).

The aim of this chapter is to unpack some of these motivations by examining important questions and significant trends in dance and education that shape current issues in dance pedagogy, such as ongoing concerns around 'advancing the field' and defining 'high quality' teaching. I begin with a survey of existing theory and research that contribute to dance pedagogical practices today. My goal is to reflect on some aspects of the development of dance pedagogy in light of the ways methods and materials have developed both in response to the phenomenon under investigation and key questions asked regarding its practice. While I mention long-term educational trends that inform dance, discussion of current issues in dance pedagogy is restricted to the past decade or so.[1]

Moreover, because the field of dance is large and my expertise is limited, I focus specifically on dance education centred in the arts, rather than in physical education, recreation or religious practices. I refer to the variety of styles of concert dance that are specifically staged for a viewing audience, instead of being part of a fitness curriculum, participatory social dance event or formalized collective ritual celebration. On its website, the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO, United States) sums up the difference in this way:

> The art of dance uses movement to communicate meaning about the human experience. It is far more than exercise or entertainment. It is a powerful medium to express one's values, thoughts, and aspirations about the lives we live and the world in which we live … Education in the art of dance develops the knowledge and skills required to create, perform, and understand movement as a means of artistic communication.
>
> (NDEO 2016)

In the second half of this chapter, I explore new directions in dance pedagogy. I present case study research derived from *ArtsCross*, a multinational,

multilingual, multiyear example of transcultural exchange centred on making, doing and observing dance. My goal here is to hone in on one activity in dance that offers a common window on how different pedagogical choices might affect behaviour: rehearsing. There is arguably some kind of rehearsal for all dances destined to be performed, including completely improvised works. Moreover, rehearsing implies teaching and learning. *ArtsCross* thus affords a unique opportunity to explore the different pedagogical choices made by diverse dance makers during rehearsal. I frame these choices in light of Shulman's (2005a) concept of 'signature pedagogies', modes of teaching that are associated with how a profession prepares people for practice. My hope is that these two parts, a review section and an example of contemporary research, will illuminate ways in which current trends and issues in dance pedagogy have developed over time and continue to do so.

Dance teaching, teaching dance

Dance education research underscores one undeniable fact: the development of a personal pedagogy of dance is a complex and challenging endeavour, bringing undeniable pressures on making instructional choices. The literature on dance pedagogy reflects these tensions. It also reveals how thoughtful responses to these concerns arise from investigations at the nexus of dance and education fields.[2]

Pedagogical content knowledge

As suggested by the opening example of a dance instructor who understands her first task is to decide *what* to begin with, content knowledge is one of the most hotly debated, tense arguments in any field of inquiry. Two current issues, dance literacy and culturally sustaining dance education, begin with the question of what substantive, rigorous and responsible content dancers must know and be able to do (Hong 2000). The idea of dance literacy grew out of Rudolf Laban's (1948) movement theories and notational systems. His prescription for 'modern educational dance' privileged the kinaesthetic properties of movement: the bodily actions, shapes and dynamic qualities that make dance a symbolic system in creative human expression (Bucek 1998). This perspective gained traction during the era of discipline-based arts education (DBAE) and the work of Elliot Eisner (1994). Following Howard Gardner

(1983, 1991), Eisner (1998: 12) theorized literacy as the ability to shape and understand meanings available in any number of expressive systems including language, media, the arts and popular culture.

The theory and practice of dance literacy pedagogy has focused in part on the use of movement notation. The question revolves around the degree to which notation-use can be linked to the development of patterns of thinking that contribute to knowledge acquisition, the formation of key concepts and improved ability to do, make and watch dance (Dils 2007). The majority of recent writing is descriptive with practical applications (Curran and Curry 2016; Watts 2010). The limited research consists of qualitative case studies with convenience sampling of students (see, for example, Bucek 2004; Heiland 2009, 2015) and a few experimental (and quasi-experimental) studies (Al-Dor 2006; Dania, Koutsouba and Tyrovola 2015; Fugedi 2003; Warburton 2000).[3]

These studies provide some evidence that notation-use in dance teaching can enhance learner's attitude and motivation, knowledge and retention, coordination and performance. Teaching notation continues to be an active area of inquiry with several schools and organizations dedicated to its development and dissemination, foremost among them the Dance Notation Bureau (United States), Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (United Kingdom) and the Language of Dance Centre (United Kingdom/United States). Though many public and private school and studio teachers report integrating movement notation (Heiland 2009), dance literacy is not mainstream.

Multicultural approaches to dance education, on the other hand, reflect a commitment to enacting pedagogies that are centred in cultural practices, especially in communities of colour (Melchoir 2011). Its critiques of dance literacy in the United States stem from a long tradition of cultural consciousness (Du Bois [1903] 1965) that would move dance away from the pervasiveness of pedagogies closely aligned with cultural hegemony and the seemingly panoptic white gaze. Proponents of multiculturalism view dance literacy as elitist and stuck in instrumental learning modalities typical of a dominant cultural mindset: that is, one should learn movement notation because it helps one achieve some other thing, like watching, reading and interpreting dances in a particular way. Instead, dance pedagogy must be responsive and culturally relevant, viewing as assets (not deficiencies) the languages, literacies and cultural ways of being of diverse students and communities (Chepyator-Thomson 1994; Ladson-Billings 1995; McCarthy-Brown 2016; Sansom 2009).

Dance scholars and educators who embrace this view argue persuasively that societies can no longer assume that the white, middle-class monolinguistic and monocultural skills and ways of being that were considered the sole gatekeepers to opportunity in the past will remain so (Cruz Banks 2009). Research on multiculturalism in dance has shifted accordingly from culturally relevant pedagogies to a conceptualization of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) (Paris 2012; Paris and Alim 2014). CSP extends beyond the tradition and practice of so-called 'asset pedagogies' to make explicit the perpetuation and fostering of multilingualism and multiculturalism with a pedagogy that sustains pluralism in practice and perspective. Using ethnographic and autoethnographic accounts, dance educators have explored culturally sustaining pedagogies using indigenous dance (Cruz Banks 2010). This research provides a window into how, for example, the Dambe Project employs music, song and dance from Guinea and Mali to structure activities that embody West African history, culture, geography and greater world perspectives. It charts efforts to decolonize dance pedagogy by infusing dance environments with non-Western dance cultures and traditions (Mabingo 2015). This work also responds to calls for the need to expand community collaborations in research and conduct research on the learning preferences of diverse cultures (Bonbright and Faber 2004).

Interestingly, both dance literacy and culturally sustaining movements seem to have arisen (at least in part) in response to the formal studio class, which has long been considered the cornerstone of dance training, providing all the technical, physical and aesthetic requirements in dance. By contrast, the literacy and multicultural view of learning is integrative, based on multiple cognitive and affective processes. These approaches seek a broader understanding of dance as an embodied experience – one that offers more holistic options that emphasize context and development of disciplinary and interdisciplinary skills (Andrzejewski 2009). The holistic view in educational theory has been built on advancements in cognitive and cultural psychology, along with emerging postliberal theories of education directed towards the restoration of communities (Bowers 1987; Bruner 1990).

These two trends also reflect an abiding tension in how to teach dance. Dance literacy is often taught in a guided discovery style. The teacher develops a series of logically designed questions to give to the dancer who then works through the tasks in sequence, and each answer leads to the next task. Eventually, the dancer comes to realize a predetermined concept and the teacher acknowledges when the correct concepts are discovered. Indigenous dance practices, on the other hand, are often transmitted in a traditional command style, where

dancers reproduce a specific set of outcomes on cue. The teacher makes the decisions. There is a direct and immediate relationship between the teacher's stimulus and the learner's response. Smith-Autard (2002) attempted to address this tension with a midway model that develops dance technical skills on the one hand (acquisition/training of the techniques) and creativity (individuality, subjectivity, feelings) on the other. The paucity of research on the midway model makes it difficult to assess its merits, though the concept makes logical sense for some types of dance education especially in the pre-professional training of Western theatrical dance. The goodness of fit with other dance practices remains less clear.

New directions in dance education research take a different approach. These researchers ask, What capacities or habits of mind–body do dance students and teachers need to acquire to engage successfully? Over the past two decades, Bond and Stinson (2007) have conducted a large-scale project examining young people's experiences in dance, drawing on multi-modal data from over 700 young people. Their qualitative study is based on interviews and phenomenological descriptions, systematically examined to portray the nature of 'work' in dance. Their data suggest that students who find dance engaging and worthy of effort cite 'interest in activities and content, desire for challenge, and appreciation for autonomy in setting their own standards and their ability to reach them' (Bond and Stinson 2007:176). This student-centred research, as it were, is a promising new direction for dance pedagogy, contrasted as it is with a larger body of research that is more teacher-centred. The study of teacher beliefs, for instance, has been an active site of investigation for several decades (Warburton 2004; Warburton and Torff 2005).

Critical dance pedagogies

Embedded in discussions of what and how to teach dance are questions of intent and intended audience. For what purpose does one introduce the dance concept of rotation: self-expression or social action? Spinning furiously, the dancer reveals the underlying rhythm of the music. With an excruciatingly slow turn, she embodies a sedimented past of dreams deferred. Should one stay silent, allowing the images to work implicitly, or invite inquiry into the subject–object of the (e)motion/(re)presentation? Some dance instructors would name the rotation a 'dance step' and be done with it. Others might invite learners to consider age, ability, sexual agency, race and gender identity in the evaluation of a rotation 'done' or 'performed'.

At first blush, these questions seem to raise again the spectre of competing choices: content versus pedagogy or intrinsic versus instrumental learning. The research on dance literacy, culturally sustaining dance, student engagement and teacher beliefs, however, demonstrates that the pedagogical content knowledge driving decision-making is contingent on the values, assumptions and biases of the participants. Since the 1990s, dance educators have attempted to shift the conversation away from these binary choices to address the 'messages behind the methods' (Lakes 2005: 3). But tensions remain, especially around the need for more reflective practices to combat what many view as an abiding and widespread inherited tradition of pedagogical knowledge acquisition (Stinson 1991; Sims and Erwin 2012).

These more philosophical investigations raise questions that issue forth from beliefs that education ought to liberate rather than domesticate: why, where and who to teach. These ideas can be traced to the challenges to authority and tradition as sources of wisdom found in the European Enlightenment (Rousseau [1762] 2003), which gained a distinctively American stamp in the early twentieth century as progressive education for democracy (Dewey [1916] 1944). This tradition gained new purpose and urgency in the 1960s through the work of Myles Horton (Adams 1972) and Paulo Freire (1970). The emerging concept of a *critical pedagogy* has profoundly influenced educational theory and practice from the 1970s to the present (Giroux 1988; Horton and Freire 1990). Since the early 1990s, dance educators have used the concept to address larger social and cultural issues in dance, including the 'hidden curriculum' of difference, sexuality and gender (Risner 2002; Shapiro 1998; Stinson 1991, 1993, 2005).

Recent scholarship using a critical pedagogy orientation in dance has focused on specific sites of change: for example, critiquing the concept of multiculturalism described above and interrogating 'authoritarian' dance practices in Western dance techniques that construct 'docile' bodies and 'unlearning' how to teach (Alterowitz 2014: 8; Barr and Oliver 2016; Risner 2009). The pedagogical goal is transformation. The hope is that in asking young dancers to participate equally in the process of their own learning and identity development, they will recognize the ways pedagogical content knowledge support artistic practices (Wilson 2016). The more dancers define with teachers what kind of production to produce, so the reasoning goes, the more they will become themselves and the better artists they will be (Ophir 2016). Indeed, in Europe and the United States, the growing acceptance of multicultural dance pedagogies focused on diversifying content is due in part to the legacy of late twentieth-century debates about why and for whom we teach dance.

Some of the most energetic approaches to critical dance pedagogies draw upon reflection-on-practice as a centrepiece of their research process. The term has been in vogue ever since Schön (1983) published *The Reflective Practitioner*. The idea was quickly extended into the notion of practice-based research and teaching-as-research (Duckworth 1987). Current dance research has moved in two directions: first, enhancing students' and teachers' thoughtful action in the moment of learning, and, secondly, examining the purpose and intended audience for instructional dance interventions. Vigorous and sustained investigations come from two quarters: increasing reflective practices and teaching defiance.

In a series of studies, Leijen and colleagues have investigated the nature of pedagogical practices of reflection and why reflection on learning can be challenging to incorporate into tertiary (post-secondary) dance education (Leijen et al. 2008b, 2009b, 2012; Sööt and Leijen 2012). These studies generally employ interview and observation methods with writing tasks to find patterns of reflective practice in small samples of dance teachers, college-aged students and dance student teachers in pre-service education. Their findings show that dance students tend to emphasize negative aspects of their experiences and neglect to point out positive aspects. Dance students and teachers alike have difficulty verbalizing their thoughts, moving from personal convictions to reflections on practice, and dealing with the highly personal and emotional nature of reflection in the arts. The pedagogical implications of reflective practice suggest that 'talking dance' does not lend itself to a simple recipe and may not be as straightforward or unproblematic as previously thought (Lavendar 1996).

More iconoclastic approaches have recently surged among the most strident educators who believe that dance pedagogy must move past incorporating reflective practices to teach people how to make up their own minds: to teach radical choice. This ideal is crystallized in the Australian educator Michael Newman's (2006) view that educators should be teaching *defiance* in both large and small ways by helping others confront barriers to their own growth, such as structural inequalities, racial conflict or social expectations. Defiance, Newman contends, is rebelliousness with a purpose. The arts have a long history of activism, defying norms and challenging authority. What seems different is the assertion of a positive right to dissent, student entitlement to training in it and a need for educators to devise pedagogies that cultivate the skills of dissent (Stitzlein 2012).

The Urbano Project in Boston, Massachusetts, provides a relevant example in dance of such 'disobedience-based arts education'. In 2011, they began exploring

the role of the dance artist in civil and political disobedience. The project directors envisioned a role for expert dance educators that actively disrupted, challenged and disoriented their students, all in the service of enhancing critical reflection to 'equip teens with tools that would allow them to enter and shape political discourse' (Kotin et al. 2013: 192). Based on a contemporary dance curriculum, they developed material collaboratively with ten teenaged students of colour to encourage the group to 'create its own language' in movement to represent experiences of social control, obedience and disobedience. All but two of the participating students had no previous dance training. According to the authors, the instructors and students participated equally in the development of 'open-ended' outcomes, discussions of collaboration and development of resulting public presentations.

In focusing on the big idea of disobedience as a pedagogical strategy, 'Speak Out. Act Up. Move Forward' invited young dancers to make explicit connections between personal experiences and the possibilities of resistance through artistic expression. In the words of the directors:

> Rather than constraining our diverse group of students by requiring them to focus on a single, narrowly defined social justice issue, our open-ended approach equipped young people to strategically and thoughtfully enter into the ongoing dynamics of authority, control, obedience, and resistance in their own lives. The result was evocative, changeable performance work that invited audience members to propose their own interpretations and see themselves as actors in the struggles Urbano dancers portrayed. Students came to view their finished work as a bridge to dialogue … to provoke and intrigue adults who, in other contexts, might not take them seriously.
>
> (Kotin et al. 2013: 199–200)

Inside–Outside

Where to begin: inside or outside? Inside, they gaze out towards the mirror at the spiral shape of bodily line. Outside, they lay on the ground eyes closed, focused inward, sensing the effects of pelvic torque. Should one observe the complex relationship between inner feeling and outer form or call attention to psychological effects of using mirrors? Maybe evocative language would help shape a mental image of bodily action? Or perhaps one need ask, who are you, really? Do you and your wheelchair truly belong here? Who gets to participate, where and when? Over the past decade, nowhere has there been more growth in ideas, questions, investigations and practices around inside–outside dance. The

tension explicit in the framing of inside–outside dance brings a host of issues to the fore, from personal somatic experience versus more scientifically sound training to socially charged questions of ability(ies) and cultural belonging.

Dancers often argue that the inner–outer debate belies the fundamental complementarity of these separate viewpoints on individual dance practices. Inside or inner dance practice derives from a group of mind–body techniques loosely called 'somatic studies'. Once considered elective, even esoteric, training, a wide range of somatic practices is now a common part of dance education (Green 2007). Philosopher and Feldenkrais practitioner Thomas Hanna (1970) is credited with coining the term 'somatics', from the Greek word *soma* meaning 'the body in its wholeness'. Somatic pedagogy rejects the mind–body dualism and champions the socially constructed nature of knowledge (Eddy 2009; Sheets Johnstone 2009). Somatic learning contexts usually remove dancers from the typical physical-spatial constraints and psychological demands of a dance class (Brodie and Lobel 2004); instead of striving to perform the 'right' or 'correct' movement, dancers learn to move from an embodied source, sensing the moment of movement in a receptive and responsive way (Fortin et al. 2002).

The prominence of individual points of view, novel learning contexts, sensory attunement and different scenarios of accessing bodily awareness leads inevitably to post-positivist perspectives on 'movement research'. A stark contrast to this approach is the field of dance medicine and science. A scientific line of inquiry in dance training has been studied since Margaret H'Doubler established the first dance major at the University of Wisconsin in 1926; medical researchers and psychologists involved with dance populations joined this scientific approach movement in the 1980–1990s (Keinänen et al. 2000; Nemecek and Chatfield 2007). These researchers use experimental methods to assess the effects of biomechanics, motor learning, fitness and mental practice on training (Champion et al. 2008; Enghauser 2003; Farrar-Baker and Wilmerding 2006; Warburton et al. 2013; Wyon et al. 2004).

Once viewed as philosophically and pedagogically opposed, recent dance research emphasizes the degree to which somatics and sciences together can question and enhance traditional teaching styles (Geber and Wilson 2010; Hutt 2010). One of the most active research agendas shared by somatics and the sciences has been the use of language and imagery in dance. In the 1990s, researchers mostly explored the pedagogy of imagery application through qualitative assessments of dance teachers' and students' experiences (Hanrahan 1995; Minton 1996; Overby 1990). Krasnow et al. (1997) learned that imagery training in conjunction with dance conditioning produced better results than

either did alone. A more recent trend is experimental study; for instance, analysis of the Franklin Method found that visual, auditory and kinaesthetic metaphors improve dancers' performances of specific skills (Heiland 2012, 2013). These complementary studies provide a more nuanced understanding of the kinds of metaphors, the delivery modalities and learning styles that can have efficacious results for individual learners.

If the abiding theme of the emerging intersection between somatics and sciences is that an individual's body–mind is an ecological system, then the cultural evolution in dance education can be described as moving from an aesthetic of idealized bodies–minds to a more inclusive aesthetic of difference (Hermans 2016). One population in particular has long been outside dance looking in: people with physical disabilities. Since the 1990s, dance educators have advocated for reframing disabled bodies as dancers with 'strategic abilities' (Albright 1998). Barriers to dance training and performance persist, however, with issues of access and availability, idealized aesthetic expectations, attitudes of peers and parents, logistical constraints and lack of information about opportunities (Aujla and Redding 2012). If a young disabled person decides to pursue dance training, the biggest constraints are availability of regular classes with appropriate content and teachers' lack of knowledge of how best to train people with disabilities (Charnley 2011; Verrent 2007). Several studies have reported heightened teacher anxieties with regard to integrated work, but there is a dearth of research on disability dance pedagogy and, in particular, time management and the effects on the disabled dancer's bodily stress (Whatley, 2007).

A related and growing trend has been the expansion of dance to people living with cognitive and motor disabilities. Dance interventions for Parkinson's disease have attracted a great deal of attention by medical researchers (Aguiar et al. 2016; Shanahan et al. 2015; Sharp and Hewitt 2014). Parkinson's disease (PD) is a chronic, progressive and disabling neurodegenerative disorder, with wide-reaching implications and negative effects on quality of life for the people it affects. Some of the most popular interventions and programmes have used ballet, modern and tango dance forms (see, for example, Westheimer 2008). Researchers hypothesize that certain dance forms will target specific PD symptoms, but they neglect the effect of pedagogy. For instance, tango requires frequent movement initiation and cessation, spontaneous directional changes and movement speeds, which may target movement initiation, turning and slowness of movement (bradykinesia). By contrast, ballet challenges strength and flexibility to emphasize posture, body alignment, projection of eye focus and

limb extension, as well as whole body coordination (Houston and McGill 2013). Both of these forms are highly structured and rule-based and tend to reinforce authoritarian, direct instructional approaches. Do the pedagogic values and approaches embodied in a particular dance style matter for PD interventions? To date, there have not been any studies testing the differential effects of diverse pedagogical approaches to dance for PD.

In this wide-ranging survey of the dance education literature, I have considered current approaches to dance pedagogy in light of key questions and research findings. I note several tensions that underlie the choices that dance teachers must confront when designing instruction. I identify areas of strength, like critical pedagogies, and areas in need of more research, like disability dance pedagogy. This review could be read as an implicit recommendation for constructing a personal pedagogy and dance curriculum that is little more than a hodgepodge of topics and teaching approaches. That would be a mistake. Straightforward comparison across these ideas and approaches, though potentially insightful, is a moot point. The wide variety of situations and settings, ideologies and ideals, practices and perspectives, resist juxtaposition.

Instead, I suggest a potentially useful strategy towards developing a personal pedagogy of dance is to adopt what Shulman (2005a/b) calls a 'signature pedagogy': a mode of teaching that has become associated with how a profession prepares people for practice. A signature pedagogy threads throughout a programme of study so that students learn to think, to perform and to act with integrity in their chosen profession. The notion of signature pedagogies in the arts has recently become a popular trend in the United Kingdom and United States (Thomson et al. 2012; Kearns 2017). In what follows, I explore the idea of a signature pedagogy in dance using the case of *ArtsCross*, a transcultural dance exchange.

Signature pedagogy

Dance pedagogy presents a highly contested area of study in which theorists and practitioners often talk past one another. And yet, the art of dance uses movement to communicate meaning, and most dance educators confront the need for some kind of summative assessment of learning. Dance creation and presentation are widespread activities in educational (and professional) settings that provide this evaluation. I contend that the variety of creative and pedagogic milieus that dancers may encounter resist straightforward comparison in

all aspects but one: the rehearsal process itself. There is arguably some kind of rehearsal for all dances destined to be performed, including completely improvised works. Moreover, rehearsing implies teaching and learning. The case of *ArtsCross* provides a unique window on the different pedagogical choices made in diverse rehearsal contexts.

ArtsCross began in 2011 as a three-way collaboration between Taipei, Beijing and London with a double focus. On the one hand, nine choreographers from the three cities are selected to work over three weeks with mixed groups of dancers, also from the three cities, to create a ten-minute work on a specific theme. On the other hand, a cluster of academics from Taipei, Beijing and London gather to watch, reflect upon and exchange ideas about the process in action. Throughout, a coterie of Chinese-English interpreters criss-cross the process. The project involved key cultural institutions in China, Taiwan and the United Kingdom: Beijing Dance Academy, Taipei National University of the Arts and Middlesex University with The Place-London Contemporary Dance School, respectively. As of 2015, over 150 people have been involved as creators, performers and documentors; forty researchers have observed the creative process and performance and have blogged and debated the issues of intercultural arts and exchange; and over fifty interpreters and project assistants have worked to provide an enabling and supportive context.

At the invitation of Chris Bannerman, director of the Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts at Middlesex University in London, I participated in three editions: Taipei (2011), Beijing (2012) and London (2013). I considered each site a case study in 'practice-based' research on creativity, employing a qualitative phenomenological method with the goal of describing the 'lived experience' of participants. As this requires a qualitative analysis of narratives and observations, methods to analyse its data are quite different from quantitative methods of research (Merriam and Tisdell 2015). *ArtsCross* observations took place during the regularly scheduled rehearsal sessions. Outside the studio, interviews and focus groups were used to gather the participants' descriptions of their experience in as non-directive way as possible, lasting between thirty and sixty minutes. Interviews were transcribed verbatim using transcription software and content analysis using NVivo8, a software organizing system used in other qualitative dance research (Nordin and Cumming 2005). Interview transcripts and field notes were imported into the software, and lower-level meaning units (free nodes) were identified and coded, in bottom-up fashion, into emerging categories (tree nodes) (Miles and Huberman 1994). Top-level themes emerged inductively from the process

of hierarchical sorting. Final stage analysis occurred as the findings were interpreted and written up. Ethical approval for these investigations was given by the University of California at Santa Cruz's Office of Research Compliance Administration.

Within and between the three editions, I observed a range of individual choreographic practices and perspectives. As I investigated the cognitive processes and relational practices at play, I also began to consider the differences in rehearsal pedagogies. I began to wonder how, in an educational context, exposure to different approaches could thread throughout a programme of study so that student dancers learn to think, act and perform in ways valued by contemporary dance artists. When I returned to Shulman's (2005a) ideas about pedagogical content knowledge, I discovered the theory of signature pedagogies in which he distinguishes three types: pedagogies of uncertainty, pedagogies of engagement and pedagogies of formation. A pedagogy of engagement promotes active, problem-based learning; pedagogy of uncertainty creates a sense of dissonance or curiosity, a need to learn; and a pedagogy of formation builds identity and character, dispositions and values, teaching habits of heart and mind because of the power associated with the repetition and routinization of behaviour (Shulman 2005a: 13–14). I found these aspects especially helpful in defining and describing choreographers' implicit pedagogical creeds in dance rehearsals. What follows are three short descriptions of the three signature pedagogies in action across the three *ArtsCross* editions.

Pedagogy of engagement

8 August 2011, Taipei National University of the Arts, Taipei, Taiwan. 'Shall we come back to work', Yen-Fang asks sweetly but it is not a question. The dancers had been working more or less consistently on solo material for about two hours and were returning from a short break. 'When doing your own exploration', Yen-Fang begins in English as the dancers sit with her in an intimate circle, 'there is something about this space … ' Her sweeping gesture, looping up and around the studio, takes the dancers' eyes (and mine) swimming up to the rafters into the pools of light cascading down. She continues, ' … a shared imagination. This particular environment, this same universe, that needs to be acknowledged.' She pauses, perhaps uncertain that she has made her point. We wait, riveted. 'Separate investigations', she nods looking around at the dancers'

> faces, 'but being in this room is like a big lab'. (Come to think of it, with the white walls and rounded roof, Studio 5 does look a bit like someone bisected a test-tube.) Yen-Fang smiles, 'But the same universe. I would like to acknowledge that and invite you to be inspired by what you see or feel here, each other … to jump in no hesitation.' Yen-Fang grins broadly, a beatific countenance. 'That was my realization for the past hour', she murmurs. Everyone is quietly nodding and smiling. It is hard not to smile when Yen-Fang does. 'Okay, back to work' she says moving quickly aside.

Yu Yen-Fang is a Taiwanese dancer-choreographer. In interviews, she reveals a deep interest in improvisation, regarding herself as a director rather than a dictator who wants to guide her seven dancers to go 'in and out of the comfort zone'. Sometimes she starts to go with them, initially joining in an improvisational task and then quietly slipping away to observe them continue it: 'I like things that are not set and that I cannot reach easily', she explained in her let's-sit-on-the-floor-and-introduce-ourselves moment. Yen-Fang mentions repeatedly her desire to engage dancers in the process 'speaking directly from their hearts'. She works with each dancer one to one. Each dancer improvises with a particular set of instructions, to embody and embrace Yen Fang's movement quality. She is particular in her search for multiplicity: observing one dancer improvising, she notices how he moves his torso from side to side, two dimensionally. At the end of an improvisation, she begins an intimate dialogue with dancer. Intermittently, throughout the dialogue, Yen-Fang demonstrates with her own body. She works with him to increase the possibility of multidirectional movement, twisting, turning, curving, dipping and tilting.

Yen-Fang's pedagogical method of engagement is relational. She meets them as people, with personalities, with voices; she meets them equally in the space. They are in dialogue; there is an exchange of knowledge. She is not telling them what to do, and they are not waiting to be instructed. Yet both of these are happening. Something is created between them because, as Yen-Fang says,

> I've felt very comfortable in this atmosphere, and I'm trying to find ways to let them speak out in the piece, since I think it would be a shame to silence their voices in favor of the work itself. This is not all that easy, and there is quite a lot of pushing and pulling … I think it's hard to strike a balance between finding a good rehearsal strategy, and just lying back and enjoying the process.

She thus demonstrates a personal commitment to these dancers who are self-directed, reflective, creative and expressive, all driven by a set of values that promote active engagement. Yen-Fang's title for the final dance performance is 'This Is a Work and We're Working on It'.

Pedagogy of uncertainty

16 November 2012, Beijing Dance Academy, Beijing, China. 'No', Robin says softly. The dancer stamps his foot, grabs his head. Robin waits. Robin stands as though lying comfortably on the floor. His verticality defined more by the displacement of space than by a feeling of weight. He looks grounded with soft, not locked, knees. I am aware of the centre of his body: head to heel, his spine is a plumb line running the length of his long body. On a long exhale, Robin lifts both arms forward, sustaining a slow upward flow and letting the hands drift overhead. He looks at the dancer, nods his head and whispers 'again'. A few minutes later: 'No', Robin says softly. The dancer stamps his foot, grabs his head. Robin waits. On a long exhale, Robin lifts both arms forward, sustaining a slow upward flow and letting the hands drift overhead. He looks at the dancer, nods his head, and whispers 'again'. Five minutes later: 'No', Robin says softly. The dancer stamps his foot, grabs his head. Robin waits. On a long exhale, Robin lifts both arms forward, sustaining a slow upward flow and letting the hands drift overhead. He looks at the dancer, nods his head, and whispers 'again'. Ten minutes later: 'Okay', Robin says softly. The dancer stamps his foot, grabs his head. Robin waits.

Robin Dingemans is a freelance choreographer in the United Kingdom and an associate artist of The Place. With close attention to process, place, detail and pace, Robin makes a deceptively simple gestural phrase illuminate the possibility of success or failure in the moment of movement. He asks the dancers to care about the enacting of effort and quality. In talking with Robin, I found a clear acknowledgement that some important part of his working method involves a creative tension between clear articulation and vague explanation. It is a practice that can lead inevitably, with the experienced and inexperienced performer alike, to misinterpretation and frustration. His calm demeanour and relentless attention seem to drive his dancers mad, their sighs and moans becoming increasingly audible along with sudden flares of temper and sharp words. As

seen in an angry debate that ensues between dancers and the interpreter about one of Robin's instructions, this is a big risk with uncertain outcomes. Standing in the environment of the Beijing Dance Academy studios, Robin mutters 'lost in translation' under his breath.

To 'get it' is to have a complex process or thought that was previously confusing become clear in your mind. The need to learn means working towards 'getting it'. Watching Robin's rehearsal, I was conscious that he was trying to 'get it' as much as the dancers. He was asking them to try and find a whole-body sense of the interconnections between small gestures linked to the breathing and for them to sense a similar sense of interconnection between one another. At the same time, I was aware of him working also to sense a connection to the dancers to better instil his ideas within them. To do so, he employs iteration as a surgical instrument, achieving precision through meticulous practice, rather than as a bludgeon to enforce adherence to a standard of perfection or style. His rehearsal strategy relies on the art of waiting, which can be easily lost in translation and challenging to interpret.

When the dancers do move past dissonance and derision, through frustration into weariness, their attention spans appear to lengthen into something else: curiosity. They begin to observe Robin more closely. The breath once held becomes sustained. The wrists once flexed become long. The arms once curved become lengthened. The timing once staccato becomes continuous. The chest once stiff and proud becomes soft and humble. The dancer's accent, his entrained habitus, once obvious becomes as subtle as the choreographed phrase. What is removed in the exchange, in the process of stripping away the varnish of technique, may be the security of a cultural identity for the contingency of a moving identity. In this way, Robin's choreography is well served by his subtle pedagogy of uncertainty, painstakingly rehearsed. His title for the final dance performance is 'The End Animal'.

Pedagogy of formation

3 August 2013, The Place, London, England. When I walk into Zeng Huanxin's Friday rehearsal around 12.30 pm, Zeng is working with Kenny, a Taiwanese dancer, on a solo section. Kenny travels backward in circling patterns, transitioning into rising and sinking phrases that stretch side to side, forward and back. These more lyrical phrases alternate between gestural

phrases (walking, gazing, reaching) and virtuosic movements that spiral in and out, turning suddenly into twisting leaps that fall to the knees only to rise immediately again to a high level balance and stillness. The rapidly cycling phrases coincide with sudden shifts in time signature not found in the music. Kenny's intense focus, stretched physique, strained visage and sweat stained clothing attest to the fact that he and Zeng have been working steadily for quite some time before my arrival, probably beginning around 11.00 am. Add that to the ninety minutes that I observe Zeng and Kenny shaping and moulding a solo section, and I calculate something close to three hours of intense rehearsal between the two of them.

Zeng Huanxin is a Chinese choreographer. There is little room for humour in his work. Zeng's movement system is strongly informed by his practice of T'ai-chi ch'üan. The discipline is impressive. All of the dancers in his piece receive explicit instructions in how to refine the movement they have been given, often demonstrated by Zeng himself. It is plain, as I watch him working in do-as-I-do fashion, that the choreographer knows exactly what he wants. There are nuanced forms and shapes to arrive at, and one of the best ways to achieve this was to have the dancers repeat them again and again until they were imprinted on their muscle memories. Initially, this seems less interesting to watch than other choreographers because here things are far less playful or exploratory. But gradually I began to question and even come to revise my opinion. Constant repetition also deepens the imprint of movement on the mind's eye of those who witness it. I focus my attention on questions of fatigue and failure.

Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. There is neither vague explanation nor waiting for personal discoveries. Zeng is detail-oriented, emphasizing specific direct and indirect foci, and use of weight and weight-shifting, at each moment in the dance. At one point there appears to be some question about exactly 'where' Kenny is centring his relationship to gravity as he shifts his weight. To my eye, comparing Zeng's demonstrations to Kenny's performance, Zeng appears to locate his centre of gravity a few notches lower than Kenny: more 'martial arts' centred below the solar plexus than 'modern dance' centred above the waist. As the rehearsal goes on and on and on, Kenny tires noticeably. He is physically spent but does not complain or retreat from a determined and earnest effort to meet the choreographer's demands. Zeng is calm and generous, but insistent. The work is going well. The labour is evident.

I am struck by the salubrious effect that fatigue seems to play in Kenny's repeated failures. To my eye, Kenny improves dramatically as his body labours: his breath deepens; his movement becomes more fluid; maybe, just maybe, his centre of gravity even lowers a notch or two. The performance becomes better, not the worse, for wear. Numerous motor learning studies have examined the effects of exhaustion on skill performance and acquisition: basically, the idea is that with increasing levels of exercise, performance should improve up to an optimal or maximal point and then decline again with a further increase in exercise intensity and/or duration. Kenny seemed to be reaching that maximal point when Zeng pushed ever so gently for a further increase just beyond capacity. I did not see a decline in the final run-through, quite the opposite, which got me wondering: if conventional wisdom says that fatigue to exhaustion is the foe of expert performance, could it also be a friend? In his wearied state, I expect that Kenny may not consciously recall every word of Zeng's directions, but I wonder if fighting fatigue somehow sediments the desired qualities in motion.

In an interview after the rehearsal, Zeng raised the question whether it is possible to cancel one of his rehearsals sometime next week. He spoke in Mandarin (through a translator) that 'the formation of his piece is now completed, and the dancers are feeling fresh about the movements'. The implication was that Zeng had built the identity of the work by building the dispositions of his dancers. But, he acknowledged, continuous repetition may cause a loss of 'freshness' to the movements. Excessive practice could reverse the positive impact, which might result in boredom. More, he said, is not always better. His title for the final dance performance is 'Walk'.

Discussion

My encounters with *ArtsCross* precipitated a reconsideration of what constitutes the development of a personal dance pedagogy. These choreographers and dancers seemed to prize expertise as a sine qua non of participation that reflected a particular 'way of being' in *ArtsCross*. Each participant evinced strong personal commitments to, and curiosity about, dance making (and rehearsal) that assumed, first and foremost, a productive stance towards learning from others. I found that resistance was acceptable (in most cases); walking out was unthinkable (in all cases). Moreover, I witnessed a measure of resiliency that suggested something more than just a group of highly motivated, self-directed, reflective, creative and expressive individuals. In their own ways, choreographers

and dancers alike enacted a growing connoisseurship of dance teaching practices as they laboured respectfully with pedagogies of uncertainty, engagement and formation. Often puzzled or frustrated, their evident desire to enhance and deepen their dance experience and professional expertise produced high levels of physical fortitude, mental flexibility and tolerance for creative and cultural differences. Rehearsal thus meant more than going through the motions of making and learning a dance to something like an answer to the question of educational fitness raised at the beginning of this chapter. As one dancer told me, 'be a good student to be a good teacher'.

While this bromide ignores the role of pedagogy itself as the study of how *best* to teach, it speaks to an implicit assumption about learning and teaching as a lifelong apprenticeship (Rogoff 1990). The question of how one sustains such a state of uncertainty, engagement and formation in life (where instruction can begin anywhere and include complex, puzzling, unfamiliar, even decentring learning) recalls the profound tensions in developing a personal dance pedagogy. In an influential essay on education and cultural pluralism, Craft (1984) noted that there are two different Latin roots of the English word 'education'. They are *educare*, which means to train or to mould, and *educere*, meaning to lead out. While the two meanings are quite different, they are both represented in the word 'education'. Opposing sides often use the same word to denote two very different concepts of learning and teaching. One side uses education to mean the preservation and passing down of knowledge and the shaping of youths in the image of their traditions. The other side sees education as preparing a new generation for the changes that are to come, readying them to create solutions to problems yet unknown. One calls for rote memorization, physical repetition and becoming good dancers that communities want to watch and that choreographers and companies want to hire. The other requires questioning, thinking and creating dance futures. To further complicate matters, some groups expect dance training to fulfil both functions but allow only those activities promoting *educare* to be used (or, more uncommonly, *educere*).

The choices that beset dance teachers suggest that there is an etymological basis for many of the ongoing debates about dance education today. My observations of *ArtsCross* underscore this conjecture. Still, I believe it is reasonable to adopt an orientation towards dance practice, like Shulman's signature pedagogy, that allows both of these stances to coexist and be mutually reinforcing. Repetition in dance has a role to play equal to that of reflection on practice. This conclusion raises the intriguing possibility that the tension between advocates of the two sides maintains a balance that results in

appropriate levels of *educare* and *educere* in dance generally. But it leaves out one of the most powerful sources of continuing learning in dance: learning from others, particularly peers.

For me, *ArtsCross* highlighted a feature of high-quality dance instruction that requires *reflection in action*: that is, creating opportunities where students learn to act and think through the problem of dance enaction in the presence of others. A signature dance pedagogy teaches one not only to acquire movement skill through iterations but also to make meaning through reflections. Dance teachers lead dancers to more complex and sophisticated ways of moving and thinking by inviting them to bring practice problems that are ill-defined and lack clear-cut solutions, thus calling up and naming their tacit knowledge, questioning their assumptions and challenging their aesthetic choices and movement logics. This distinguishes a signature pedagogy from those in which students are presented always with instructor-directed propositions.

In the end, my reading and research suggests that the most effective and ethical personal dance pedagogy ensures that healthy communities are formed by teaching movement skills in the most appropriate manner (depending upon ability and level, culture and desire) and by asking critical questions that engage uncertain formations of original human experiences. As the respected US dance pedagogue Susan Stinson once said about dance research and practice: 'May each of us make appropriate use of both passion and skepticism, pursue questions that matter to ourselves and others, and find the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need' (2016: 197).

Notes

1 This survey includes data (English language only) from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and the National Dance Education Organization's Dance Education Literature and Research descriptive index (DELRdi), which together represent ever-expanding research databases of peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings and other documents from print and online sources (Bonbright and Faber 2004). I also consulted the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, which houses one of the world's most extensive archival collections in dance; Google Scholar, which provides a simple way to search broadly for scholarly literature; international journals in dance and education; and suggestions and recommendations from peers. My search sought to rank documents, weighing the full text, where it was published, whom it was written by, as well as how often and how recently it has been cited in other scholarly literature.

2 I do not address the role of technology in pedagogical theory and practice. The study of educational technologies in dance rests on the assumption that online and interactive multimedia environments provide opportunities for enriched instruction, distance collaboration, creative inquiry and personalized feedback (Leijen et al. 2008a, 2009a; Smith-Autard 2003). Several dance researchers have explored the design and implementation of visual teaching tools, digital media, distributed performance and virtual learning environments in the teaching of dance content, motor skills, critical reflection and dance making (see, for example, Alaoui et al. 2014; Forsythe 2003; Wilke et. al 2005). However, the majority of published research, especially in Internet Computer Technology (ICT), focuses on the development of software resources and learning platforms without assessing their influence on dance pedagogy (Delahunta and Shaw 2008; Risner and Anderson 2008). The prevailing view is that, to date, these technologies have not been researched extensively or incorporated fully into everyday dance pedagogy (Dania et al. 2011; Hsia et al. 2016).

3 In a scientific experiment, subjects are randomly assigned to treatment conditions. The only differences in the groups are thus due to chance. If the subjects have not been randomly assigned to the treatment condition, the experiment is a quasi-experiment (quasi = seeming, resembles).

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